



10th February 2026

Mayor Patricia white

Shoalhaven City Council

Nowra City Administration Centre
36 Bridge Rd, Nowra NSW 2541 Australia

Dear Mayor,

I'm writing on behalf of the Red Head Villages Association Inc.(RHVA), regarding the lack of all-ability beach access in our area.

We have a number of people with significant disabilities for whom a beach visit has become virtually impossible. For them, an outing like this is incredibly important for wellbeing and social contact. It is as important for their carers, often family, who struggle with supporting them. One community member told me of taking her wheelchair bound partner to Washerwoman's Beach for a quick swim, and it taking 3 hours to get from the carpark to the water. This was no exaggeration. It is about 200 metres. She is his primary carer and is credentialled in the field.

We also have a growing number of older residents who are having difficulty accessing beaches due to the lack of suitable paths or stairs.

At present there is nowhere with beach all-access between Sussex Inlet and the southern side of Lake Conjola.

I wrote to Shoalhaven City Council (SCC) Community Connections about this issue in July 2025 and the reply stated that though there is a policy, there are no budget plans for this at present. There has been a Council survey for Bendalong Boat Harbour for all-ability access but the RHVA position is that there would be safety and accessibility concerns for that area. Washerwoman's beach has facilities and a more suitable landscape. I note that there was sufficient budget for an upgrade for beach access for able bodied people to Washerwoman's beach near Willow Street Bendalong late in 2025, but not for all access anywhere else. We are happy to meet with Council to discuss this issue and would request that it be considered urgent.

The Shoalhaven Council Disability Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2026 (DIAP) states as its aim in theme 2 that *"People with disability find accessing places of recreation, learning and leisure, community celebration, cultural participation, tourism, events, entertainment and shopping easy, safe, and inclusive."*

For those in our local community with difficulty in mobility, this aim is not being met.

I also note that the Council is seeking community input for the 2026-2031 DIAP.

Bendalong – Berringer Lake - Cunjurong Point – Manyana - North Bendalong

As I'm sure you are aware there are obligations included in the Federal Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA), and the New South Wales Disability Inclusion Act 2014 No 41 (DIA), for the provision of services for people of all abilities to community facilities.

Lastly, the New South Wales government Accessible Australia grants program Tranche 2 is open now for these specific issues. A grant would make compliance with the DDA and DIA easier, and support our community members in a very meaningful way.

The RHVA requests an onsite meeting with council as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely

Chris Hayes
President RHVA Inc

Bendalong – Berringer Lake - Cunjurong Point – Manyana - North Bendalong